

Halloween, Queen for a Day

by Terje Anderson

As a child, I hated Halloween. As a confirmed non-candy eater, going door to door for sweets held little appeal. Costumes were even worse: some of the most humiliating childhood memories I have are those of standing on the elementary school play ground with several hundred costumed children, parading for judges giving prizes. I was usually dressed in a costume which was improvised late the night before, when parental coercion finally overcame my strong desire to be the only student without a Halloween disguise. The result, as expected, was that I usually went as one of the three old reliables: a hobo, a ghost, or (most tellingly) in drag.

At about the age of ten, I finally abandoned Halloween, relieved that never again would I frantically try to dream up a costume idea.

My resolve weakened when, at seventeen, I rediscovered Halloween. Not the Halloween of little kids and candy corn, but the gay bacchanal of Halloween, our high holy day of costumes, frivolity and gaiety. The first Halloween in a gay men's bar mesmerized me, as I stared at dozens of imitation Carmen Mirandas, Judy Garlands, and Diana Ross's, to name but a few of the impersonators who ranged from mediocre to convincing.

But even more than the drag queens, I was taken in by the uncharacteristic abandon which defined the celebration. Carnival in Rio, Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and Halloween in

a gay bar share an energy level and vitality matched by few other celebrations.

Since my rediscovery of Halloween, rarely have I let the event pass unnoticed, and costume is de rigeur. I have been a lumberjack, a hockey player, and both ends of a camel. An appearance as Jackie Kennedy, complete with pink dress and pill box hat, once scandalized and delighted a party (although I steadfastly resisted friends' efforts to smear ketchup on the outfit as exceeding the bounds of acceptable taste).

I've taken a particular liking to group costumes. I dressed as an Andrews sister and a Supreme with the same group of guys in successive years. I've been the only male nun in a group of twelve (managing to give virtual heart failure to an unsuspecting restroom user who saw me standing at a urinal dressed in complete habit).

Perhaps my favorite group costumes were the ones I went on with a group of feminists I hung out with at college. Our appearance as the "seven deadly sins" was marred only by my disappointment at not being allowed to go as "Gluttony," but instead being forced to wear a two-foot long papier mache phallus while dressed as lust (typecast again).

Equally successful was our sojourn as "Freudian Slips," clad in lingerie,

acting out psychological cliches. (I, for example, wore handcuffs to indicate my state of "arrested development".)

The great group non-costume involved five of us bar hopping in only jock straps, braving both potential arrest and late October winds in the process.

Cruising in costume can be an adventure - except in cases such as the aforementioned athletic supporters, rarely do you have a good sense of what all those people in the bar really look like underneath the disguise. The phrase "trick or treat" takes on all kinds of new significance in that setting. (I retain fond memories of a Halloween encounter when two of us wearing vast quantities of grease paint and make-up ended up in bed together - messy, but somehow in keeping with the holiday spirit).

Halloween was meant to be a gay holiday. Living in a society where we are forced to hide, celebrating in costume some how seems more than appropriate - an safe. Even the images of Halloween monsters, vampires, and ghouls seem to suit us - invisible by daylight, coming alive only after night fall. As any reader of Anne Rice's vampire gooks can tell you, the lure of the supernatural is laced heavily with the erotic and the homoerotic.

From its campiest to its most sensual, Halloween is ours - let's enjoy it for all it is worth.

GLSA Back in Session

Are you lesbian, gay, bisexual, or just unsure? Are you set in your sexuality but would like to learn more about alternative lifestyles? Do you ever just get confused? Maybe we can help. The Gay and Lesbian Student Association at the University of Vermont is a social, political, and educational organization designed to inform people on the problems and

issues faced by lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. GLSA also serves as a support group for its members.

The GLSA office is located in B-164 Billings, and our phone number is 656-0699. GLSA meetings are held weekly, on alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays. To find out where and when the meetings will be held, just call the office.

Purpose

The purpose of *Out in the Mountains* is to serve as a voice for lesbians, gay men and our supporters in Vermont. We wish the newspaper to be a source of information, support and affirmation for lesbians and gay men. We also see it as a vehicle for celebration of the goodness and diversity of the lesbian and gay community.

Editorial Policy

We will consider for publication any material which broadens our understanding of our lifestyles and of each other. Views and opinions appearing in the paper do not necessarily represent those of the staff.

This paper cannot, and will not endorse any candidate for public office. We will serve as a vehicle for informing our readers about the views of candidates and actions of public officials on issues of particular importance to lesbians and gay men.

We will not publish any material which is overtly racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, ageist or homophobic.

All materials submitted must be signed and include an address and/or phone number so we can contact the author should we need to consider editorial revisions. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles may appear anonymously, upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed. No revisions or rejections of materials will occur without dialogue with the author.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit materials for publication and to share your comments, criticisms and positive feelings with us. This paper is here for you.

The deadline for submitting material for each issue is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Materials should be sent to:

Out in the Mountains
PO Box 438
Hinesburg, VT 05461.

Out in the Mountains is published by the *Out in the Mountains* collective: Elizabeth Mae, Howard Russell, David Ryan, Suzi Shira, Philip Roberts, Linda Wheeler, Terje Anderson, Gilles Yves Bonneau, and Antonio Baio.

Out in the Mountains Subscriptions

Subscriptions to 'Out in the Mountains' are available for \$10 per year (12 issues), \$5 for low-income and unemployed people. By subscribing, not only will you guarantee prompt delivery of the newspaper to your mailbox (in a discreet plain envelope, of course), but you will help to underwrite the sizable costs of assembling, printing and distributing the newspaper.

In addition to subscriptions, we welcome contributions to support our continued existence.

Checks should be made payable to 'Out in the Mountains' or OITM and sent, along with this form,

to: **Out in the Mountains**
PO Box 438
Hinesburg, VT 05461

Name _____
Mailing Address _____

_____ One year subscription (\$10)
_____ Low-income/unemployed (\$5)
_____ Donation

I'd like to get involved as a newspaper staff member. Let me know how I can help.